

AD-A265 785



2

**SSI**

Strategic Studies Institute  
U.S. Army War College

**THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA:  
FROM A STRATEGY OF CONFLICT  
TO CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT**

Donald E. Schulz

DTIC  
ELECTE  
JUN 16 1993  
S C D

Reproduced From  
Best Available Copy

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A

Approved for public release  
Distribution Unlimited



REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
<small>Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.</small>				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY. (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE 12 May 1993	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE  The United States and Cuba: From a Strategy of Conflict to Constructive Engagement (U)			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S)  Donald E. Schulz				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  Strategic Studies Institute US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks Forbes Ave, Root Hall, Bldg 122 Carlisle, PA 17013-5050			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER  ACN 93022	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  Approved for public release; distribution unlimited			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) The author discusses the potential explosiveness of the present Cuban situation and the possibility that it might lead to U.S. military involvement. The crisis of the Cuban Revolution has once again raised a number of security issues for the United States, along with important questions about the effectiveness and wisdom of the three-decade-old U.S. policy of containment and punishment. In particular, we need a better understanding of those forces promoting political stability and instability as well as the impact of U.S. policy. If, as the author suggests, American policy may actually be strengthening the Castro regime in the short run, while building up tension which may lead to a violent explosion in the longer run, then a strong case can be made for a change to a strategy better suited to fostering a peaceful transition. The author details the components of such a policy.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS containment and punishment; Castro regime; constructive engagement; threat reduction; Radio Marti; U.S. embargo; Torricelli Law			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 53	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

**THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA:  
FROM A STRATEGY OF CONFLICT  
TO CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT**

**Donald E. Schulz**

Accession For	
NTIS CRA&I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
By	
Distribution /	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	

May 12, 1993

UNCLASSIFIED

**93-13515**



**93 6 15 20 6**

\*\*\*\*\*

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

\*\*\*\*\*

Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050. Comments also may be conveyed directly to the author by calling commercial (717) 245-4123 or DSN 242-4123.

\*\*\*\*\*

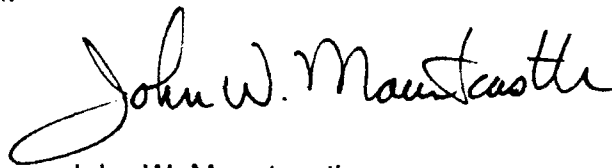
The author wishes to thank Dr. J. Richard Planas, Dr. Carmelo Mesa-Lago, Dr. James A. Morris, Dr. Gabriel Marcella, Dr. Thomas L. Wilborn, and Colonels John W. Mountcastle and William A. Barry for their incisive comments on earlier drafts of this work. Needless to say, any errors of omission or commission are entirely the author's responsibility.

## FOREWORD

The crisis of the Cuban revolution has once again raised a number of security issues for the United States, along with important questions about the effectiveness and wisdom of the three-decade-old U.S. policy of containment and punishment. Many observers believe that the Castro regime is in its final hour, and that its passing may be accompanied by massive bloodshed and a new wave of refugees to southern Florida.

Given the potential explosiveness of the Cuban crisis and the possibility that it might lead to U.S. military involvement, it would seem appropriate to take a closer look at the Cuban situation. In particular, we need a better understanding of both those forces promoting political stability and instability and the impact of U.S. policy. If, as the author suggests, American policy may actually be strengthening the regime in the short run, while building up tension which may lead to a violent explosion in the longer run, then a strong case can be made that it is time for a change to a strategy better suited to fostering a peaceful transition. One of the virtues of this study is that Dr. Schulz spells out in detail the components of such a policy.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to publish this report as a contribution to understanding events in this important region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John W. Mountcastle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent part.

John W. Mountcastle  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DONALD E. SCHULZ is an Associate Research Professor of national security policy at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. He holds a Ph.D. degree in Political Science from Ohio State University and has taught at several universities. He has coedited two books, *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean* and *Political Participation in Communist Systems*. His articles have appeared in *Foreign Policy*, *Orbis*, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. More recently he lived in Honduras where he researched a book on *The United States, Honduras and the Crisis in Central America*, scheduled for publication this year by Westview Press. Currently he is editing a book on *Cuba and the Future* and another on Mexico. His most recent publication is *How Honduras Escaped Revolutionary Violence* (SSI monograph, June 1992).

---

## SUMMARY

This study examines the prospects for Fidel Castro's political survival and for Cuba's political stability. It looks at those forces, both domestic and foreign, that tend to strengthen the regime and impede change, as well as those that might produce a violent political explosion. Specific proposals are made for U.S. policy, with a view to defusing the potentially dangerous situation that has developed and facilitating a peaceful transition to democracy and economic reform. Among the major conclusions and recommendations are the following.

### KEY FINDINGS: THE SOURCES OF REGIME STABILITY

- In spite of the devastating economic crisis that the country is experiencing and its painful social consequences, the Castro Government will probably survive in the short-to-medium run (5 years).

### PROSPECTS OF A MASS UPRISING

- Socioeconomic hardship alone is not enough to create a revolution from below. In recent years, the security apparatus has been purged and strengthened; new *mechanisms of repression* have been created. The regime has not hesitated to use these means to suppress dissent and prevent the formation of an organized opposition.
- The absence of any autonomous agency of change is likely to be the crucial missing variable in any revolutionary scenario. There are no institutional sanctuaries in Cuba in which to masquerade and develop political activity. There is no church comparable in stature or political activism to the Roman Catholic Church in Poland; no independent labor union like Solidarity that can mobilize the masses against the government; no organization of

---

dissident intellectuals like Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia. Nor are there dissident leaders of the stature of a Lech Walesa or a Vaclav Havel.

- Because of this lack of personal and institutional leadership, the dissident movement has no mass following. Most Cubans see no viable alternatives to the existing regime, or at least no good ones. They fear the unknown, and the government skillfully plays on these insecurities to promote passivity where it cannot generate active support.
- Constant surveillance and mobilization; fear of repression; and the energy-sapping, time-consuming requirements of daily survival all militate against a mass uprising. People are demoralized, isolated and suspicious. Rather than openly resist authority, they adapt, remain passive or try to escape the island.
- The regime has been careful not to engage in the kind of gratuitous bloodshed that might "spark" a spontaneous uprising or massive demonstration. Without such government violence to dramatize the moral issues and break through people's natural defense mechanisms, it is unlikely that the kind of emotional catharsis can occur that might produce large-scale, anti-regime actions.

## **PROSPECTS OF A COUP D'ETAT**

- Nor do the prospects of a coup d'etat look particularly good. The trial and execution of General Arnaldo Ochoa sent a forceful warning to dissidents within the regime, underlining the risks of anti-regime activity. Counterintelligence operations have been broadened and intensified. Such measures have effectively deterred the growth of the kind of organized dissent that was just beginning to emerge prior to the Ochoa affair.
- Castro still has some support, based on his charismatic authority (especially his personality and



nationalist and revolutionary credentials) and his continuing ability to reward loyalists. The elite is still largely composed of first-generation revolutionaries. These people have followed Fidel for a long time. They have benefitted enormously from his rule, and most probably still do.

- Just as important under present circumstances, the Cuban elite has no collective interest in Castro's ouster. Quite the opposite: The continuation of the existing system is its sole guarantee of survival. If Castro goes, they lose their power, privileges and, perhaps, their lives. Even alienated members of the elite are unlikely to seek Castro's overthrow, since many are convinced that U.S. policies are designed to bring down the entire apparatus. Unless that perception changes, the vast majority will continue to either actively support Castro or remain passive.

#### **U.S. POLICY AND BEHAVIOR**

- The specter of an external threat—whether in the form of a U.S. invasion, sabotage, embargo, hostile rhetoric or a revanchist Cuban exile community poised to return to the island to wreak vengeance and recover lost properties—has long been one of the keys to Castro's survival. By manipulating the fears that these images invoke, Castro has been able to wrap himself in the cloak of Cuban nationalism and pose as the defender of the Cuban people and the revolution. This has enabled him to mobilize both the elite and the masses behind his leadership and policies to a degree that would not have otherwise been possible.
- U.S. policy is complicated substantially by the existence of a large, politically influential and viscerally anti-Castro Cuban American community concentrated in, primarily, southern Florida. This influence has strengthened considerably the hard-line inclinations that were already dominant in U.S. foreign policy circles. It has been all the more potent because there

is no political constituency in the United States for a "softer" line towards Cuba. Consequently, the Cuban American community has been able to exercise a virtual veto over U.S. policy.

- The problem is that threats, isolation and punishment are not likely to bring down Castro. Indeed, such policies/behavior are counterproductive in that they actually help prop up the regime. Moreover, they make a peaceful transition, democracy and economic recovery even more difficult. There is an enormous amount of repressed tension in Cuba today. By seeking to heighten and bottle up that stress, U.S. policy could well contribute to a bloody social explosion in the long run.

#### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- If the United States has been playing to Castro's strengths, then the logical thing to do would be to change the nature of the game so as to better be able to exploit his weaknesses. A policy of "constructive engagement," designed to lower tensions and open up Cuba to U.S. influence, would pose major problems for the regime. Among other things, it would undermine the rationale for the garrison state and make political and social control much more difficult. Such a strategy would seek to dissolve the siege mentality that justifies the regime's repression; it would attempt to flood the island with ideas and information and subject Cubans to alternative political and social values and lifestyles. There is nothing more potentially subversive to such regimes than the exposure to democratic ideas and materialistic temptations. The more contact Cubans have with Western values, the more their appetites would be whetted and the more difficult it will be for Castro to convince people of the need to maintain the status quo. If, in addition, this can be done in a way that does not threaten the Cuban elite with extinction, it may be

---

possible to facilitate a peaceful transition to a more open society.

## **SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

Among other things, the Clinton administration should:

- Lower the level of U.S.-Cuban hostility/tension through a concerted campaign of threat reduction, including a lowering of inflammatory rhetoric.
- Distance itself from the Cuban American National Foundation, while continuing to maintain amicable ties with that organization.
- Depoliticize Radio Marti and use its broadcasts to reassure Cubans that they have nothing to fear from the United States. Specifically, they must be reassured that their lives and properties will be secure in the post-Castro era.
- Adopt a more visible and aggressive posture with regard to the prevention of paramilitary operations from being launched against Cuba from U.S. territory.
- Repeal the Cuban Democracy Act (Torricelli Law) or, if that is politically impossible, enforce it to the minimal extent possible.
- Devise a modest humanitarian aid program for Cuba.
- Promote person-to-person contacts between U.S. and Cuban citizens through mail, telephone and transportation services, tourism, scientific and cultural exchanges, the establishment of press bureaus, and other measures.
- While maintaining the U.S. embargo, modify it to allow the export of computer-related hardware, software and other telecommunications and printing devices.
- Lift the embargo's prohibitions on the direct marketing of books, periodicals, newspapers, compact disks, videotapes and other communications items.

- Cease pressuring foreign corporations from investing in Cuba.
- Initiate or increase government-to-government cooperation in such areas as counternarcotics operations, anti-hijacking measures, environmental protection, and migration.
- Give Cuban authorities advance notice of any U.S. military exercises in the region and avoid any operations that might give the impression of being a dress rehearsal for an invasion of Cuba.

## THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA: FROM A STRATEGY OF CONFLICT TO CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

There is a nagging sense that an important moment has come. Part of me thinks there is something we should be doing other than let it fall by its own weight. But I can't think what it is.

—Susan Kaufman Purcell<sup>1</sup>

There is a moment in "I, Claudius" where Claudius, the King, looks back at all that had happened during his lifetime and before and decides that it is all rotten and has to be destroyed. And he makes a statement. He says: "Let all the poisons that lurk in the mud hatch out."

In a very real sense, Claudius' curse sums up much of what has happened in Cuba during the last several years. All of the weaknesses and pathologies of the Castro regime, many of which had been hidden beneath the placid, monolithic facade, have come to the surface. The revolution has soured. The situation has grown so bad that most political observers today assume that the regime is in its "final hour." Cuba is "collapsing," and the only real questions are when and how Fidel will go and what will replace him.<sup>2</sup>

While Castro must leave sooner or later, reports of his impending demise have been much exaggerated. A *golpe de estado* is possible, but not probable. Nor is it likely, under current circumstances, that the Cuban masses will rise up and overthrow the dictatorship. And although Castro could become a casualty of assassination, suicide or natural death, this is not the kind of thing that is readily subject to prediction. Nor would it necessarily lead to the collapse of the regime. For a variety of reasons, Castro's "final hour" seems likely to last for several years, perhaps longer. Indeed, rather than speaking of the termination of the regime, it may be more appropriate to think in terms of a new stage in the revolution (the latest of many

and perhaps not the last) that could persist for the foreseeable future.

Within this context, it is time to reconsider the strategy to which the United States has been wed for over three decades. There are both reason and evidence to suggest that existing policy is not only ineffective, but counterproductive. Put simply, it is actually helping to prop up the regime. Beyond this, it must be recognized that our national interest lies not simply in getting rid of Castro, but in promoting a transition that will be relatively painless for all concerned. In these respects, the policy into which we have been locked (primarily for ideological, psychological, and domestic political reasons) has been neither effective nor constructive. Not only is it likely to contribute to Castro's survival in the short run, but it could very well build up tension within Cuba to the point where a peaceful transition becomes impossible in the longer run.

#### **Back to the Future: The Cuban Socioeconomic Crisis.**

In March 1990, Fidel Castro announced the coming of a "special period in time of peace"—in effect, an economic state of emergency. In August, drastic measures were imposed to ration petroleum. Daily gas and fuel deliveries were to be reduced by 50 percent in the state sector and 30 percent in the private. Household electrical consumption would be cut. Cement and construction plants would reduce their hours of operation. The Punta Gorda nickel plant would be closed. The new oil refinery in Cienfuegos, built with Soviet aid, would not open. To ease the anticipated crisis in transportation, hundreds of thousands of bicycles and two bicycle manufacturing plants would be purchased from the People's Republic of China. A nationwide project would be instituted to replace tractors and combines with oxen. Cuba, it seemed, was entering an era of spiraling underdevelopment. If it was not exactly going back into the Stone Age, it was at least experiencing substantial deindustrialization.

While the immediate precipitator of these measures was a huge shortfall in Soviet oil deliveries, the larger cause of the

crisis was the accelerating collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. During the latter half of 1989, Cuba had begun to experience serious trade disruptions due to **perestroika**. By then, Soviet firms had acquired the right to trade directly on foreign markets. Cuba had to deal with individual Soviet enterprises, which preferred customers who could pay in hard currency to those who could not. As a consequence, deliveries from the USSR had become increasingly unreliable.

At the same time, the Eastern European Communist regimes were falling like dominoes, and the impact on Cuba was dramatic. Between the first half of 1989 and the first half of 1990, sugar exports to the island's primary buyers in the region fell by 56 percent.<sup>3</sup> The decline in these markets and the erosion of the Soviet sugar subsidy<sup>4</sup> underscored the risks of a development strategy that had put most of Cuba's "eggs in one basket." In spite of a worldwide oversupply of sugar and generally low world prices, the Castro government had continued to invest heavily in that industry on the assumption that Cuba's Council on Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) market was secure and that high prices were guaranteed.

By the turn of the decade, Cuba was even more dependent on sugar than it had been before the revolution. Now, however, its Eastern European trade partners were fleeing, and its relations with the Soviet Union were increasingly uncertain. To make matters worse, all this was occurring at a time of disastrously low world market prices, when most traditional buyers were becoming largely self-sufficient (due to sugar-beet production), and changing consumer tastes (diet colas, light beer) and a revolution in technology (laboratory-produced sugar) were threatening to "devastate the few remaining economies still heavily dependent on sugar."<sup>5</sup>

At the January 1990 meeting of COMECON, moreover, the Soviets proposed that trade between member countries be conducted on the basis of market prices and hard currency beginning the following year. In tense meetings in Moscow and Havana, they informed the Cubans of their intention to drastically cut economic aid in virtually every category, from

barter trade to subsidized prices for Cuban goods and low-interest debt financing. No longer would the Castro government be allowed to resell excess petroleum deliveries abroad for hard currency.

The Soviets did try to let the Cubans down as easily as possible. Even in 1991, they continued to purchase Cuban sugar at more than twice the world market price. At the same time, they sold the island oil at half the market price.<sup>6</sup> But they made it clear that there would be no more long-term concessionary agreements. The Soviet subsidy, estimated at just under \$4 billion in 1990, slid to \$2.5 billion. However, there were signs that the trade pact for 1991 was not being fully implemented and that the real subsidy might be as low as \$1.5 billion.<sup>7</sup> And there was worse to come. In the words of a Soviet Embassy spokesman in Havana: "On 27 December it will be all over. Of course, we will be pleased to conduct trade with Cuba afterwards, but at world market prices. And in addition, the question of debts must be settled."<sup>8</sup>

By fall 1991, Cuba's trade with Eastern Europe was virtually paralyzed; its ability to buy goods from the Soviet Union had been reduced by billions of dollars. Overall, the island was importing 50 percent fewer foreign goods than it had 2 years earlier.<sup>9</sup> On top of everything else, the disintegration of the USSR meant that the Cubans now had to negotiate with the authorities in the various union republics, as well as with the 20,000-odd firms still interested in the island's exports. Reports from Moscow, moreover, suggested that the economic disruption in that country might soon become so severe that the Soviets, once the world's leading producer of petroleum, might have to import the product themselves.<sup>10</sup> The implications for future deliveries to Cuba were obvious.

The island was now mired in the most serious socioeconomic crisis since at least the Great Depression. Castro himself proclaimed it the most difficult period in Cuban history.<sup>11</sup> The question was whether (and when) the economy would bottom out and begin to recover or whether it had entered a process of terminal decline.



The new year brought no relief. In July 1992, after more than three decades as Cuba's main petroleum supplier, the Russian pipeline finally ran dry. During the first half of the year, the two countries<sup>12</sup> had agreed to exchange a million tons of raw sugar for 1.8 million tons of oil. But talks to extend these arrangements were cancelled, and by mid-year the last shipments of petroleum and sugar had reached their destinations. Although some trading of Cuban sugar for equipment and spare parts continued, the amount involved was miniscule compared to the past. Nor did the prospects for the future look promising. Since 1988, Russian oil production had fallen by almost 35 percent. Domestic needs and standing commitments to the Ukraine and Belarus' were expected to absorb almost all of the available supply. At the same time, soaring prices for basic goods had led most Russians to cut back on sugar consumption, even as private firms were beginning to look to Western Europe for that product. Increasingly, the Cubans found themselves out in the cold.<sup>13</sup> While they had agreements to supply sugar to China, Kazakhstan, Lithuania and a few other countries, they had to scramble on the spot market to survive.

The impact of the oil cutoff was immediate. Even with greatly scaled-back consumption, Cuban domestic petroleum production could supply only a third of the island's electrical needs. By late July, blackouts had become an almost daily occurrence in Havana. The price of candles on the black market soared to 10 pesos, almost a tenth of the monthly salary of the lowest-paid workers. Even so, they rapidly disappeared. By October, the state-controlled press was providing Cubans with instructions on how to make their own candles.

By autumn, trade relations with the former Soviet Union, including Russia, were at a "nadir"<sup>14</sup> The drastic reduction of fuel had turned the political management of the country into "an agony."<sup>15</sup> Only in November, with the signing of a new one-year trade pact, did Cuba's prospects improve a bit. The agreement called for the exchange of one million tons of sugar for 1.6 million tons of crude. A separate protocol and an "option" clause, however, held out the possibility that, if everything went

well, Russia might sell as much as 3.3 million tons of crude and refined products to Cuba in 1993.<sup>16</sup>

Still, in the short run at least, there was no way out. While Cuban officials had for some time been planning for the day when they would have to acquire new trade partners overnight (the "zero option," as they called it), the Castro regime lacked the hard currency that was a prerequisite for establishing such extensive new commercial relations. Even the favorable terms of the San Jose Pact, under which Mexico and Venezuela sold oil to Central American and Caribbean countries at preferential rates, seemed beyond Havana's reach, since the latter had no way of meeting the agreement's requirement that 80 percent of every purchase be paid in cash.

Nor did the government's attempts to attract foreign capital through joint ventures and production-sharing arrangements seem likely to do much more than make a dent in the problem. Even if the regime's most optimistic predictions were realized (which seemed improbable), tourism would not produce net annual earnings of more than a few hundred thousand dollars within the near future. Nickel production also held some promise, but even a doubling of exports seemed unlikely to bring in more than an additional \$400 million.<sup>17</sup> As for the government's much-ballyhooed biotechnology program, it had enjoyed mixed success at best. A few of these products were on the technological cutting-edge. Now that the COMECON market was no longer available, however, the prospects for this sector looked much less promising. Cuba faced the problem of breaking into a world market dominated by large multinational corporations, a formidable task considering its lack of testing, marketing, packaging and financing skills.<sup>18</sup>

The one wild card in the deck was oil. Cuba has been encouraging France, Canada and other countries to explore the potentials for offshore development. A major strike could still turn the island's economic equation on its head. However, this is a fairly long shot. There is oil out there, but it is mostly high-density crude. While Cuba may be able to use limited amounts of this in its own industries, it will be of little interest to potential foreign customers. To date, no significant amounts of light crude have been found and no revenues produced.

Without such discoveries, the various other components of the Cuban strategy seem unlikely to bring in more than a billion dollars in new revenue annually in the years immediately ahead.<sup>19</sup> This is not very much when one takes into account what has been lost. In his traditional 26th of July speech, which was delayed until early September, Castro revealed that Cuba had suffered a direct loss of \$4.7 billion a year due to the lower prices that it was now receiving for its sugar, rising import costs, loss of credits, and other factors. Another billion dollars in indirect losses was attributed to the destabilization of supplies, problems in export production, and unspecified financial problems. Thus, altogether, Cuba would lose an estimated \$5.7 billion in 1992, in comparison to 1989.<sup>20</sup>

Nor was this all. Castro now announced that work on Cuba's largest industrial project, the Juragua nuclear power plant, would have to be discontinued. The Russians were demanding \$200 million in cash to continue work on it. They were also insisting that Cuba meet a \$300,000 monthly payroll for technicians and that another \$200 million in financing be obtained from third countries.<sup>21</sup> These were impossible demands. Bowing to the inevitable, Fidel declared that work would be suspended until economic conditions permitted a resumption. (Though he also raised the possibility that the stoppage might be permanent.)

It is difficult to overstate the shock effect of this development. For many Cubans, the nuclear facility had been a symbol of the long-hoped-for future, the one bright spot in an otherwise bleak economic horizon. Over the years, more than \$1.1 billion had been poured into the project. Now, it seemed, that enormous investment would be lost. Moreover, few could miss the suspension's implications for the island's economic recovery. Official predictions that Cuba would be out of the woods by 1995 were based on the assumption that at least part of the Juragua plant would be on line. The stoppage meant that there was no hope of solving the energy crisis in the foreseeable future.

Towards the end of the year, the government's leading economic planner, Carlos Lage, gave a comprehensive accounting of Cuba's decline: Since 1989, he disclosed, net

import capacity had fallen from \$8.1 billion to \$2.2 billion.<sup>22</sup> Seventy-three percent of the island's import resources and over three-fourths of its markets had been lost. Two-way trade with the countries making up the former Socialist bloc (the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe) was only 7 percent (\$830 million) of what it had been. Oil imports had fallen from over \$13 million tons to 6.1 million tons. Because of sharp declines in fertilizer, herbicide, chemical and animal feed imports, the governments's food program had failed to meet the needs of the population. (Milk production, for instance, was down by 45 percent.) Cuba, moreover, was getting few breaks from the international market: The price of her wheat and milk imports had risen, while that of her nickel and sugar exports had declined. So desperate was the government to sell its sugar that it was dumping it on the world market at **below** the going rate of 6 to 8 cents a pound.<sup>23</sup> Nor was there any relief in sight. The 1993 sugar crop, he predicted, would be smaller than even the modest 1992 harvest. Cubans would have to prepare themselves for another hard year, "as difficult. . .or even more so" than 1992.<sup>24</sup>

All in all, between 1989 and 1992, the Cuban Gross Domestic Product seems to have declined by between 34 and 51 percent.<sup>25</sup> This was enough to discourage even the eternally optimistic Fidel: "I will be a sigh in history," he mused.<sup>26</sup> Increasingly, the old dictator seemed depressed and out-of-touch. No doubt the thought of ultimate defeat, of the destruction of all that he had worked so long to build, weighed heavy on his mind.

And not only his. By now, it had become evident that as long as Castro remained in power Cuba would be a miserable place to live. As the economic noose tightened, social pain intensified. In response to the crisis, the government had imposed a series of drastic austerity measures, including a major expansion of rationing. Basic food items, as well as such "conveniences" as soap, shampoo, tobacco and toilet paper, were tightly rationed. Public transportation was cut sharply; factories were closed and workers laid off. Hospitals began to run out of medical supplies; 8-hour blackouts became commonplace. In Havana, dumpsters full of rotting produce

and other refuse lined the streets because there was not enough gasoline for garbage trucks to make frequent pickups. Meanwhile, office workers were rotated through rural cooperatives in a desperate attempt to achieve agricultural self-sufficiency. Housewives spent endless hours waiting in line for meager rations of milk, eggs and bread. For most, meat and fresh fish had disappeared long ago.<sup>27</sup> Increasingly, the question that seemed to be on people's minds was: "How long can Fidel keep going?" In this atmosphere of intensifying stress and repression, the prospects of a social explosion or military coup never seemed better.

### **Can Castro Survive? On the Prospects for a Revolution From Below.**

But appearances can be deceiving. Socioeconomic hardship alone is not enough to create a revolutionary situation. In recent years, the security apparatus has been purged and strengthened, and the regime has not hesitated to aggressively use it to suppress dissent and prevent the formation of an organized opposition. This absence of any autonomous agency of change is likely to be the crucial missing variable in any revolutionary scenario. As long as the security apparatus can effectively penetrate and neutralize society and the politico-military institutions of the state, the likelihood of a successful coup or popular uprising is fairly remote.

A mass uprising is improbable for a number of reasons. The first, and most obvious, is the extraordinary system of controls that has been developed and perfected over the years. The history of revolutions suggests that "a minimum degree of freedom of expression, communication, and association are needed for the masses to be able to spearhead a revolution...." Otherwise, the "spontaneous convergence" of thousands of unorganized, desperate individuals into a unified opposition strong enough to overthrow a totalitarian regime is not something that occurs easily.<sup>28</sup>

Part of the problem is overcoming the fear of repression. Beyond that, however, there is the need to communicate and plan political activities. The regime's strategy puts a premium

on mobilization. Even before the current crisis, Cuba was one of the most militarized societies in the world. Now almost every month brings an announcement of some new "defense brigade" or security measure to heighten control and vigilance even further. There have been mobilizations to send city dwellers to the countryside to help with agricultural production; mobilizations to combat black marketeering; mobilizations to repress political malcontents. Most visible in the capital, thousands of workers have been mobilized to expand a huge network of "people's tunnels" beneath the streets of Havana—concrete shelters where weapons and ammunition can be stored and people protected in the event of the U.S. attack that Castro keeps warning about.<sup>29</sup> The net effect is to "keep people busy, to keep them moving from side to side."<sup>30</sup> As long as their activities are closely supervised, they are unlikely to have the time, energy, opportunity or courage to engage in anti-regime behavior.

Beyond this, surveillance has been so extensive and intensive as to effectively deter major organized opposition. To engage in such activity requires considerable trust among the participants. In Cuba, however, the security apparatus has so penetrated society and state that trust has become a scarce commodity. Most people have grown accustomed to wearing "masks," hiding their true feelings behind a facade of conformity and support for the regime, in order to avoid the sanctions that are the bane of anyone considered suspect. Recent reports that the president and two other members of the Cuban Democratic Coalition, a dissident group linked to the Cuban American National Foundation, were collaborating with the security police highlight the problem: If true, they suggest that no one can be trusted. The police have so infiltrated the dissident movement that you can never be sure to whom you are talking. On the other hand, such reports could also be disinformation designed to heighten distrust within and split the dissident movement. Either way, the effect is to weaken the movement, dissuading outsiders from joining and inducing insiders to drop out.

For those who are not deterred by such obstacles, there are other risks and costs: harassment; physical abuse;

---

imprisonment; loss of employment, food rations or housing. Dissident leaders are increasingly being put on trial, and the penalties meted out are often draconian: Omar del Pozo of the National Civic Union has been sentenced to 15 years on charges of treason; Yndamiro Restano, leader of the Harmony Movement, received 10 years for producing pamphlets calling for a multiparty system; Sebastian Arcos was given 4 years, 8 months, for spreading "enemy propaganda." At the same time, new instruments have been created to supplement the already-extensive network of military, paramilitary and police institutions. Rapid Response Detachments have mobilized civilian volunteers to enable the authorities to more quickly suppress public expressions of discontent. A Single Vigilance and Protection System has been formed to coordinate the activities of frontier troops, police, and neighborhood vigilance groups. Increasingly, the regime seems to be acquiring the capability to detect acts of defiance before they occur. On a number of recent occasions, security police and government supporters have lain in wait at the site of public protests. When the demonstrators revealed themselves, they were quickly subjected to attack and arrest. Through such prompt and effective measures, the momentum of the dissident movement has been contained.

This points to one of the fundamental weaknesses of the opposition: the absence of institutional sanctuaries in which to masquerade and develop political activity. In Cuba, there is no Church comparable to the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, no independent labor union like Solidarity that can mobilize the masses against the government. Nor is there any organization of dissident intellectuals a la Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia. As Enrique Baloyra has observed, this institutional vacuum has "made the atomization that characterizes Stalinism more effective in preventing the development of horizontal solidarities that normally precede the crystallization of organized forms of public protest." In the absence of this form of protest, the government has had no need of engaging in massive physical violence. "The water cannon, the baton, the cattle prods, the gas canisters and gas masks are all ready to be utilized, but they have been unnecessary thus far."<sup>31</sup>

Absent, too, are dissident leaders of the stature of a Lech Walesa or a Vaclav Havel, who might galvanize the masses to rebel through their example. In the one instance where a nationally-known figure with charismatic qualities appeared to have that potential, he was killed. The trial and execution of Division General Arnaldo Ochoa, "Hero of the Republic" and former commander of the Cuban expeditionary forces in Angola and Ethiopia, sent a forceful message to would-be dissidents both within and without the regime: No opposition will be tolerated. No one is safe. If this could be done to Ochoa, it could be done to anyone. Dissidents know that their lives will be spared only as long as they do not pose a serious threat to the government. Castro can afford to let them survive precisely because they do **not** constitute a major danger. Current levels of repression are sufficient to maintain control and keep the small dissident organizations fragmented and in disarray.

Given this lack of personal and institutional leadership, it should not be surprising that the dissident movement has no mass following. These groups are composed almost entirely of intellectuals; few workers or students have joined. Most Cubans see no viable alternative to Castro. They fear the unknown; and the regime skillfully plays on these insecurities to promote passivity where it cannot generate active support. The slogan "Socialism or Death" sums up the bleak options as they are presented to the populace. Few opportunities are missed to inform Cubans of their likely fate should a capitalist restoration occur. Stories of economic chaos, hardship, political disintegration and ethnic strife in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union serve as potent warnings for those who might be tempted to opt for a free market and democracy. Other stories compare Cuba favorably with the poverty and insecurity that suffuse daily life in most other Latin American countries. Commentators pointedly note Washington's failure to "keep its promises" to needy friends like Nicaragua, Panama and Russia. The message is obvious: Even if Cuba were to go capitalist, it could expect little help from the United States.

Considerable effort also is being made to reassure Cubans that their government will not abandon them. In contrast to the economic "shock therapy" being applied in the former



---

Communist countries and Latin America, the Castro regime makes a point of emphasizing that no one will be allowed to starve. Many Cubans still believe that the current system spares them from the worst aspects of capitalism: hunger, homelessness, soaring medical costs, and so on. The system may be in utter decay, but it shields them from competition, provides them with security, and avoids the crushing poverty and enormous gaps between rich and poor that are found in most other Latin American countries.

In short, life with Fidel may be hard, but it is all that most Cubans know. Constant surveillance and mobilization, fear of repression, the perception that there are no alternatives (or at least no desirable ones), and the energy-sapping, time-consuming requisites of daily survival (which, among other things, entail long waits in seemingly endless lines for basic necessities) all mitigate against a revolution from below. People are isolated, suspicious and fearful. Rather than openly resist authority, they adapt, remain passive, or seek refuge in escapism. Most would rather hide or run than fight. Thus, the significance of the growing number of Cubans who are willing to "take their chances at sea." (About 2,500 a year succeed in making it to the United States; many more die in the attempt.) The regime well understands the importance of such escape mechanisms. Both openly and covertly, it seeks to use them to contain or siphon off social tension. At the same time, it has been careful not to engage in the kind of gratuitous bloodshed that might "spark" a spontaneous uprising or massive demonstration. Without such government violence to dramatize the moral issues and break through people's natural defense mechanisms, it is unlikely that the kind of emotional catharsis can occur that might produce large-scale anti-regime actions.

For all these reasons, plus several others that will be discussed presently, a revolution from below does not seem to be in the cards. (At least, not at this time.) After an initial wave of hope among anti-Castro forces during the collapse of Eastern European and Soviet communism, inertia has set in. People are demoralized and tired; there is a pervasive sense

---

of powerlessness. Most have become resigned to having Castro around for some time to come.

**Can Castro Survive?  
On the Prospects for a Revolution From Above.**

Nor do the prospects of a *golpe de estado* look particularly good. Castro is nothing if not a master politician. ("I am a slave to power," he has remarked.)<sup>32</sup> The Ochoa affair dramatically underscored the risks for disgruntled members of the politico-military apparatus who might also be tempted to remove their "masks."<sup>33</sup> At the time, there was evidence of considerable discontent within the armed forces and Ministry of Interior (MININT). Some officers may even have begun to develop a program for a National Salvation Front that might have served as the nucleus of a political opposition.<sup>34</sup> Fidel's brother, Raul, had openly fulminated against those who criticized and "congregate[d] against the figure of our commander-in-chief."<sup>35</sup> Subsequently, Raul used the occasion to purge the MININT of hundreds of security personnel. The institution was effectively decapitated, with all key officials being removed from office and remanded for trial on charges of corruption, dereliction of duty and the illegal use of government funds. In their place were assigned officers from the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR), under the direction of General Abelardo Colome Ibarra, a long-time **raulista**, who as the new minister of the interior became (arguably) the third most powerful man in Cuba.

At first glance, the MININT purge seemed little more than an effort to cleanse an institution that had been corrupted by drug trafficking and other illicit activities. Below the surface, however, these developments reflected a long and bitter rivalry between the MINFAR and the MININT, and especially between Raul Castro, the minister of defense, and General Jose Abrantes, the minister of interior. Raul's victory over Abrantes was also a victory of the MINFAR over its traditional institutional enemy. The MININT now became an appendage of the military. Subsequently, counterintelligence operations were broadened within both ministries and a centralized control

system activated to monitor the location of high-level officers twenty-four hours a day.<sup>36</sup>

These events had a chilling effect on the kind of internal dissent that was beginning to emerge prior to the Ochoa affair. No doubt that alienation has persisted—indeed, it has almost certainly spread and intensified—but the conditions no longer exist in which it can be transformed into organized opposition. As in the case of Cuban society at large, atomization and distrust pervade elite circles.

Notwithstanding the above, it would be a serious mistake to assume that Castro no longer enjoys any elite or mass support or that the support that he does have is entirely coerced. Unlike the communist revolutions in Eastern Europe, which were mostly imposed from above by the Soviet Army, the Cuban revolution had indigenous roots. Fidel came to power independently; and he was never a Soviet puppet. To many Cubans, he remains a charismatic figure—part hero, part father, and always larger than life. He is the personification of the revolution and, to some, the living symbol of the nation, sources of legitimacy that should not be underestimated even in these troubled times. The Cuban elite, in particular, is still largely composed of first-generation revolutionaries, whose personal devotion to their *lider maximo* (and, to a lesser extent, their ideological commitment) probably remains fairly high in spite of all that has happened. Over the years, these people have benefited enormously from Castro's rule, and most probably still do.<sup>37</sup>

Such sources of loyalty often produce unquestioning obedience. Indeed, intellectual dependence and submission have been carefully cultivated in Cuba at both elite and mass levels. Witness, for instance, the response of Jesus Montane, one of the participants in the legendary attack on Moncada Barracks, when asked what recent advice he had given Castro. His reply: "I do not advise him. He does not need it because he has full use of his mental faculties. I support his decisions, especially those dealing with the country's economic development."<sup>38</sup>

Not everyone, of course, is as docile as Jesus Montane. One who was not was Carlos Aldana. As a Politburo member with wide-ranging responsibilities for foreign policy, ideology, culture, education, science and sports, Aldana was Cuba's premier bureaucrat. He was also something of a reformer.<sup>39</sup> He had initially been an admirer of Mikhail Gorbachev's economic restructuring program, once even telling an interviewer that a lack of flexibility had doomed the Eastern European Communist regimes. From time to time, he had been identified with such liberal attitudes as a willingness to tolerate dissent (even going so far as to suggest that dissidents be able to participate in parliamentary elections) and permit greater freedom for Cubans to travel abroad.<sup>40</sup> In December 1991, however, he abruptly shifted gears, delivering a vitriolic attack on dissidents before the National Assembly of Peoples Power.<sup>41</sup> Since part of this speech smacked of self-criticism for his past sympathy for perestroika—Fidel had been so good as to correct him on this matter—one could not escape the impression that his embrace of the hard-liners' position constituted a rectification for previous errors. But it was too late; his reversal did not save him. By June, rumors were circulating that Aldana was in trouble. And, sure enough, in September he was removed from office, ostensibly for "deficiencies in the exercise of his post and serious mistakes in his personal behavior."<sup>42</sup>

While Cuban authorities were quick to reject any suggestion that Aldana had been a dissident or that his ouster had been for political reasons, skeptics noted that the kind of charges levelled against him were not ordinarily sufficient to result in a dismissal from high office. They seemed more of a pretext than anything else. Moreover, they came at a time when a number of other lower-level officials—some of whom had been identified with reform—had been replaced. In combination, these developments suggested that Castro was sending a warning to those who might be tempted to pursue a more independent agenda. Aldana may not have been Amaldo Ochoa, but his removal was likely to reinforce elite paralysis. If even this "moderate" could be disgraced, no one was safe.

Meanwhile, Castro was further centralizing and expanding his powers. The constitution has been revised, giving him tighter control over the military. Fidel is now head of a newly created National Defense Council, whose mission is to direct the country in conditions of war or during a general mobilization or state of emergency. He now has the legal framework he needs to declare a state of siege should economic conditions continue to deteriorate or political turmoil break out. Many dissidents expect him to do just that sometime this year.

Finally—and perhaps most important—under present circumstances the Cuban elite has no collective interest in Castro's ouster. Indeed, quite the opposite: The continuation of the existing system is their sole guarantee of survival. If Fidel goes and the regime collapses, they lose their power, privileges and, perhaps, their lives. Even alienated members of the elite are unlikely to seek Castro's overthrow, since many are "convinced that U.S. policies. . .are geared to bring down the entire apparatus without distinction and not just the diehard Stalinists. They read those policies as intending to destroy everyone ever associated with the regime."<sup>43</sup> Unless that perception changes, the vast majority of the elite will continue to either actively support Castro<sup>44</sup> or remain passive, regardless of the dolorous implications for the country's future.

### **The Strategy of Conflict and the Politics of Counterproductivity.**

This brings us to yet another source of regime stability: namely, U.S. policy and behavior. Many years ago, Jean-Paul Sartre remarked that, if the United States did not exist, the Cuban revolution would have to invent it. The specter of an external threat—whether in the form of a U.S. invasion, sabotage, embargo or a revanchist Cuban exile community poised to return to the island to wreak vengeance and recover lost properties—has long been one of the keys to Castro's survival. By manipulating the fears that these images invoke, Fidel has been able to wrap himself in the cloak of Cuban nationalism and pose as the defender of the Cuban people and the revolution. This has enabled him to mobilize both the elite

and masses behind his leadership and policies to a degree that would not have otherwise been possible.

This is not an easy issue to come to terms with. For many Americans, current U.S. policy remains not only the most obvious and appropriate response to Cuban hostility but the one with the most innate emotional appeal. There is a personal quality to this three-and-a-half decade conflict that has rarely been noted, but which nevertheless remains very much at the heart of the relationship. To many, Castro is not merely an adversary, but an enemy—an embodiment of evil who must be punished for his defiance of the United States as well as for numerous other reprehensible deeds. In this sense, U.S. policy has sought more than a simple isolation or containment of Cuba. There is a desire to hurt the enemy that is mirrored in the malevolence that Castro has exhibited towards us. If Fidel suffers from a "nemesis complex," so most assuredly do we.<sup>45</sup>

The problems with such an approach to the Cuban dilemma are severalfold. On the one hand, there are the issues of morality and effectiveness so clearly posed by the Cuban Democracy Act (popularly known as the Torricelli Law), which seeks to tighten the U.S. embargo on the island. After having recently had so much unsuccessful experience with economic sanctions, one would have thought that the United States would have learned that such measures rarely have the effect intended. Sanctions did not punish Manuel Noriega, Saddam Hussein or General Cedras nearly as much as they did the Panamanian, Iraqi and Haitian people. The masses, rather than the elites, have to bear the brunt of the hardship. This was why these measures failed in those cases and why they are unlikely to succeed in Cuba, where the vast majority of the trade in question is in foods and medicines.<sup>46</sup> For all his rhetoric, Castro does not really care that much about the Cuban people. (If he did, he would have retired some time ago.) What matters most to him are personal power and grandeur. He thinks of himself as a World Historical Actor. For over three decades, Cubans have been a vehicle for an enormous ego trip, and they will continue to be used for that purpose as long as he remains in power. Regardless of any sanctions that we

might levy, Castro will continue to fight to the last drop of his people's blood for the principles he professes to believe in.

But apart from questions of morality and effectiveness, there is the issue of counterproductivity. All too often, we have behaved in ways which have had precisely the opposite effect from what was intended and required by U.S. interests. Put bluntly, we have **strengthened** the regime and made a peaceful transition to democracy even more difficult.

Castro is a master at manipulating American fears and anger. He knows how to push all the right buttons in order to generate the foreign "threat" that he so desperately needs. Unfortunately, we have a tendency to react instinctively to his provocations, thus playing his game and falling into his traps. In so doing, we have encouraged the passivity of those Cubans who are alienated from the regime and have energized Castro's supporters.<sup>47</sup>

The U.S. dilemma, of course, is complicated substantially by the fact that there is a large, politically influential and viscerally anti-Castro Cuban American community in (primarily) southern Florida. It would be going too far to say that our Cuban policy has been "made in Miami." Nevertheless, Cuban American influence—primarily through the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF)—has been palpable and has strengthened the hard-line inclinations already dominant in U.S. foreign policy circles. This influence has been all the more potent because there is no political constituency for a "softer" or more flexible line towards Cuba. There are no domestic political gains to be made by changing current policy, while the political costs are obvious. The upshot is that the Cuban American community has been able to exercise a virtual veto over U.S. policy.

And that is a problem. Emotions as intense as those that many Cuban Americans feel towards Castro can often cloud sound judgment. The Cuban Democracy Act, in which CANF played a major role, is a prime example. The law has provided Fidel with a superb target of opportunity, and he has taken full advantage of it by launching one of the most massive propaganda campaigns in years.<sup>48</sup> The government has

organized street protests and workplace demonstrations, lambasted the measure in front-page editorials, and reported virtually anything negative that anyone has said about it anywhere in the world. The impression is being cultivated that the United States intends to starve the Cuban people into submission. The effect has been to intensify the siege mentality that already existed, fanning nationalistic fervor, deflecting public anger away from the regime and onto the "Colossus of the North," and providing a pretext for stepped-up repression. In the process, the government's supporters have been mobilized and its foes further demoralized and isolated.

This demoralization, of course, is not restricted to those actively engaged in political dissent; it also afflicts the populace at large. To the extent that the Torricelli Law is effective and life becomes even harder, demoralization and docility may be expected to increase. As Tocqueville pointed out many years ago, these are not the kind of conditions that are likely to give rise to active resistance.<sup>49</sup> Revolutions rarely occur when conditions are so bleak that people can see no way out; rather they happen when things are improving—or, at least, when there is a perception that change and improvement are **possible**. Rising hopes and expectations are critical missing ingredients for a new Cuban revolution. And the Torricelli Law does nothing to foster them.

Beyond this, moreover, we have effectively isolated ourselves on the issue. With the exception of Israel, even our closest allies do not support us. (In November, only two countries joined the United States in voting against Cuba's U.N. General Assembly resolution urging repeal of the U.S. embargo.) There is widespread resentment of Torricelli's sanctions against foreign ships and American subsidiaries that do business with Cuba. Many countries view these measures as violations of their sovereignty, as well as international law. Some also cannot but feel a certain sympathy for the Cubans. The United States has come away from the affair looking like an arrogant bully.

But more important than the Torricelli Law and its ramifications, there is the much larger issue of the "Miamian." There is a widespread fear in Cuba that Castro's fall will be



followed by the return of a conquering horde of exiles who will reclaim their confiscated properties and wreak vengeance on all who have collaborated with the regime. These fears are not simply the product of Castro's propaganda: In August 1990, the University of Miami's Research Institute for Cuban Studies and a former Dade County Commissioner began gathering data for a register of properties expropriated by the Cuban government. Exiles were invited to record their claims, with the expectation that the list would be used to recover properties after Castro's ouster. Within a week after the story appeared in the *Miami Herald*, more than a thousand inquiries were made. Predictably, the Cuban media had a field day. The story "sent chills up the spines of millions of Cubans who were living in properties once owned by exiles."<sup>50</sup>

By 1991, exile groups were publicly fighting over how to dispose of the confiscated properties once they had been recovered by a post-Castro government. The CANF unveiled a Cuban reconstruction program that called for the sending of ten thousand Cuban American professionals to teach the islanders how to adapt to a free-market economy. A draft constitution was drawn up. Some even called for the formation of a provisional government-in-exile and suggested that exile seniority should be the criterion for leadership. Meanwhile, war fever was spreading fast. Increasingly, militant right-wing exiles were conducting training exercises and engaging in commando assaults on the island. In rally after rally, anti-Castro crowds took up the chant of "War! War! War!"

All this played into Fidel's hands wonderfully. The regime had long sought to foster the specter of an exile threat as a means of manipulating domestic opinion. (At least one of these organizations, Alpha 66, had apparently even been given Cuban government funds to launch attacks on the island.)<sup>51</sup> Such behavior reinforced the image of the "neocolonial Miamian," bent on reconquering Cuba and returning it to the status of a U.S. protectorate; it inflamed nationalistic, class and racial passions, making it all the more difficult for those who were disenchanted with Castro to engage in active opposition. Among other things, Cuba was now a predominantly non-white population, while the Miami exile leadership was

overwhelmingly white. No matter how alienated from Castro Cuban blacks and mulattoes might be, it was hard to imagine them rushing to embrace an exile restoration. Quite the opposite. Many might well fight to prevent a restoration of the Old Order.<sup>52</sup>

Let us be clear. What is being criticized here is not the Cuban American community per se, nor even the Cuban American National Foundation. The anti-Castro sentiments of the vast majority of exiles are entirely understandable, and this writer, for one, has a deep empathy for them. Similarly, the CANF has done much admirable work—for instance, in helping Cubans to escape from the island and adjust to their new life in the United States. But the dominant elements in the Cuban American elite have their roots in the pre-Castro era; they long ago lost touch with the hopes and fears of Cuban Cubans. Moreover, their primary leader, Jorge Mas Canosa, is a man of enormous ambition, who has made no secret of his desire to become the next Cuban president. In many respects, Mas is a capitalist mirror image of Fidel Castro: demagogic, intolerant, dictatorial, with an enormous ego and a propensity for delivering "thundering speeches" exuding "hatred and intransigence."<sup>53</sup> He has often played to the worst instincts of Cuban Americans, encouraging (intentionally or unintentionally) violence-prone elements to attack or harass not only Castro's Cuba but anyone (the *Miami Herald* comes quickly to mind) who expresses views on the subject that are different from his own. This is not a democratic alternative to Fidel Castro, and those islanders familiar with Mas are not anxious to trade in their leftist dictator for one from the opposite extreme.<sup>54</sup>

Unfortunately, Mas Canosa and his followers have had a powerful influence on U.S. policy. In part, this has been the product of domestic politics. No president or presidential candidate since Jimmy Carter has been willing to risk losing Florida's large bloc of electoral votes by appearing to be "soft" on Castro. (Bill Clinton had rushed to embrace the Torricelli Bill even before George Bush; the latter's State Department was leery of those provisions that risked undermining U.S. relations with the international community.) The Reagan and Bush

administrations, moreover, were especially sympathetic to the right-wing exiles, whose anti-Communist, pro-capitalist beliefs so closely mirrored their own. For their part, the exiles were useful allies in promoting some of the Reagan administration's pet projects: They played a key role in the efforts to organize and wage the Contra war; and had helped win U.S. military aid for the UNITA rebels in Angola. Over the years, President Bush's son, Jeb, became an informal liaison between the White House and the Miami Cuban leadership. In this capacity, he spared no effort to attract leading Republican fundraisers—including his father and President Reagan's daughter, Maureen—to speak at local events where they invariably played to the anti-Castro emotions of their audience. The upshot of this *abrazo*, by the turn of the decade, was that the United States had become locked into a policy straightjacket at precisely the moment when flexibility was most needed.

**The United States, Cuba and the Future:  
From a Strategy of Conflict to Constructive Engagement.**

Cuba is stuck at a crossroads, and so is U.S. policy. Rather than facilitating change, the United States has helped shore up the status quo. Castro plays the confrontation game extremely well. Over the years, he has been highly successful in manipulating the spectre of the "Yankee threat" to mobilize his countrymen behind his leadership and policies. In effect, successive American administrations—both Republican and Democratic—have repeatedly played into his hands by enabling him to wrap himself in the cloak of besieged nationalism. In the process, it has been the Cuban people—especially political dissidents—who have suffered. It is no accident that passage of the Torricelli Bill was followed by a new crackdown on the internal opposition—including the vicious beating of Cuba's leading dissident, Elizardo Sanchez Santa Cruz. Once again, the United States had provided Castro with a pretext for repression.

One is reminded of the metaphor used by Radio Marti's Ricardo Planas: We have failed to notice that the wall—which is indeed falling—is leaning in our direction. Consequently, by

pushing rather than pulling, we have actually helped prop up the regime. Castro survives by fostering political passivity among the masses and by solidifying his support among those who have supported him in the past. Within this context, predictions about the dictator's imminent fall—whether by U.S. political leaders or the Miami exile elite—send the wrong message to the Cuban people. News that the exiles are making military preparations and are drawing up constitutions and economic recovery programs for a post-Castro Cuba suggests that the solution to the Cuban problem will come from abroad; moreover that there will be little role for those Cubans still in Cuba. Not only do these predictions mislead the masses about the probable course of future events, but they relieve them from the responsibility for dealing with their own problems. If Castro is going to be toppled by external forces, there is no incentive for "Cuban Cubans" to take the initiative and risk their lives. By the same token, the message simply energizes and helps Castro mobilize his supporters, who fear for their homes, privileges, careers and even their lives.<sup>55</sup>

In short, threats, isolation and punishment are not the way to promote change in Cuba. They are not likely to bring Castro down in the short-to-medium run (the next 5 years). They will, however, aggravate the current crisis and prolong Cuba's agony, and this could well make a peaceful transition, democracy, and economic recovery even more difficult to achieve. Make no mistake about it, there is an enormous amount of repressed tension in Cuba today. By seeking to heighten and bottle up that stress, U.S. policy could well contribute to a bloody social explosion in the longer run.

What is the alternative? If, as has been argued, we have been playing to Castro's strengths, then the logical thing to do would be to change the nature of the game so as to better be able to exploit his weaknesses. A policy of constructive engagement, designed to lower tensions and open up Cuba to U.S. influence would pose major problems for the regime. Among other things, it would undermine the rationale for the garrison state and make political and social control much more difficult. Such a strategy would seek to dissolve the siege mentality that justifies the regime's repression; it would flood

the island with ideas and information and subject Cubans to alternative political and social values and lifestyles. There is nothing more potentially subversive to such regimes than the exposure to democratic ideas and materialistic temptations. The more contact Cubans have with Western values, the more their appetites would be whetted and the more difficult it will be for Castro to convince people of the desirability of maintaining the status quo. If, in addition, this can be done in a way that does not threaten the Cuban elite with extinction, it may just be possible to facilitate a peaceful transition to a more open society.

### **A Tactical Agenda.**

What specifically should be done? Here one must differentiate between measures that can be taken immediately, without waiting for favorable actions from Cuba, and those that should await negotiation and should come as a result of positive (perhaps reciprocal) moves from Havana.<sup>56</sup>

The first thing is to try to lower the level of U.S.-Cuban hostility/tension through a concerted campaign of threat reduction. Our rhetoric must be toned down. Cubans need to be reassured that the United States is not planning to invade or otherwise engage in unprovoked attacks on the island. This is already the officially declared U.S. policy, but it needs to be emphasized early by President Clinton and reiterated from time to time by other high-level officials. This is needed to help counteract the fears that are being so skillfully manipulated by Castro.

Along these same lines, the new administration should distance itself from Jorge Mas Canosa and the Cuban American National Foundation. There are other, more moderate elements in the Cuban American community who should be consulted in the making of our Cuban policy. (Carlos Alberto Montaner's Cuban Democratic Platform and Enrique Baloyra's Cuban Social Democratic Coordination come quickly to mind.) This does not mean that the CANF should be ignored; it is far too important for that. But as Elliott Abrams has observed, "it is a mistake for Washington to appear closer to

any one of these groups in what everyone agrees is going to be a power struggle. . . .Some distancing is now needed to avoid verifying Castro's propaganda that Cuban-American millionaires and Washington are in collusion."<sup>57</sup>

One way of doing this is to depoliticize Radio Marti. As matters now stand, the station's favorable, detailed coverage of Mas Canosa and CANF gives the impression that the latter's projects and leaders represent U.S. policy. Those who disagree with the foundation's approach to the Cuban problem—including Cuba's most important dissident, Elizardo Sanchez—tend to find that their views are downplayed. (Another concern is CANF's cozy oversight relationship to the station. Mas Canosa heads the Presidential Advisory Board on Broadcasting to Cuba.) This needs to be changed. Radio Marti plays an important role in informing the Cuban people about current events that are ignored or distorted by the official media. To assure its objectivity and credibility, it should be placed under the direction of nonpolitical leadership, less susceptible to pressure by clientele groups. At the same time, another CANF project, TV Marti, should be closed. The station operates in violation of international conventions signed by the United States, which prohibit the use of another country's assigned television channel. Its broadcasts, moreover, are easily jammed. It is an unnecessary irritant, ineffective for purposes of communicating the news, and has simply provoked Castro into retaliating by interfering with U.S. radio broadcasts.

It may also be useful to use Radio Marti to publicize positive aspects of the economic reforms in Eastern Europe and China, and to assure Cubans on the island that their homes will not be taken away without providing them with alternative (comparable or better) housing. Assuring bureaucrats and military officers not involved in crimes that they have nothing to fear from a political opening and market reforms would also be helpful, as would a greater willingness to criticize such actions as the Miami "real estate registry."<sup>58</sup>

In addition, the Clinton administration should strongly disassociate itself from ex-ile paramilitary operations against Cuba. Such attacks are militarily useless and only play into

Castro's hands by "proving" his claims of a foreign threat. The attorney general should publicly reiterate the government's determination to enforce the Neutrality Act and adopt a more visible and aggressive posture, in cooperation with local authorities, to prevent violent assaults from being launched from U.S. territory.

At the same time, it may be possible, even at this early stage, to begin taking some confidence-building measures in the military arena. At minimum, we should give the Cuban government advance notice of any U.S. military exercises in the region. We should also avoid any operations that might give the impression of being a dress rehearsal for an invasion of Cuba. Havana might even be invited to send observers. Granted, under the current climate of hostility and suspicion, Castro would probably not accept this overture. But there is no reason why we should not begin preparing the ground for such contacts. Eventually, it may even be possible to invite Cuban participation in the Inter-American Defense College.

In an ideal world, too, the Torricelli Law would be repealed. Unfortunately, such a move will be politically difficult. (Among other things, it would represent a reversal of President Clinton's previous support for the measure.) Nevertheless, messages need to be sent both to the Cubans and to our foreign friends and trading partners. To the former, we need to give assurances that we are not trying to starve them into submission. U.S. policy is not—or at least should not be—malicious. To the latter, we need to indicate that we respect their sovereignty and will abide by our international commitments. We must not allow Cuba to become a divisive factor in our relations with other countries. Should the president decide that the political costs of repeal are too great, Torricelli should simply remain unenforced.

The current crisis also provides us with an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that we can set aside old grudges when humanitarian issues are at stake. A modest humanitarian aid package for Cuba, composed of sorely needed medical supplies and food, should be proposed by the administration and passed by Congress.<sup>59</sup> Those few remaining obstacles to the provision of such items by private charitable groups and

Cuban Americans should be removed. Again, Cuba's agony gives us an opportunity to show that we care about the Cuban people by directly helping to alleviate their suffering. Such measures would send a powerful message both to the islanders and to the international community. They would speak eloquently about what we, as a nation, stand **for**—as opposed to merely what we are **against**. At the same time, they might well serve as a step towards substantive negotiations. We could let it be known that, if the Cuban government were willing to respond constructively to some of our concerns, we would be willing to partially lift the embargo, so that food and medicine could be sold to Cuba directly, rather than indirectly through foreign subsidiaries.

A second group of proposals would seek to go beyond a mere lowering of tensions and begin the more ambitious and difficult process of building a positive relationship and fostering constructive change. What is involved here are the basic elements of what Gillian Gunn has called a "communications strategy."<sup>60</sup> This would emphasize the promotion of person-to-person contacts between U.S. and Cuban citizens through mail, telephone and transportation services, tourism, scientific and cultural exchanges, the establishment of press bureaus, and so on. One of the weaknesses in our current policy of isolation and economic strangulation is that it has not taken advantage of important opportunities to promote a freer flow of ideas and information. To allow U.S. citizens—especially tourists—to travel to the island in large numbers would benefit the Cuban economy. Thus, we severely restrict the number of American visitors and limit the amount of money they can spend.

This is a mistake. One of the factors fortifying the Castro regime is Cuba's insularity. The fact that it is an island makes the task of isolating the populace from potentially corrupting outside influences much easier than was the case in Eastern Europe. Means must be found for breaking through this insularity. The more contact we have with the Cuban people, the better. If this enables Castro to earn a bit more foreign exchange, then so be it. The amount would be minor compared to what has been lost in recent years—certainly not nearly



enough to salvage the regime. Indeed, increased U.S. cultural penetration could be expected to exacerbate Castro's problems of control by exposing Cubans to North American lifestyles and political ideas, demonstrating that capitalism does work (and that even the Cuban government recognizes this), and highlighting the inequalities in the government's policy of "tourism apartheid." This last has already created much resentment among ordinary Cubans, who are not allowed to patronize many of the restaurants and recreational facilities that tourists frequent. While the regime will continue to try to isolate the populace from the subversive effects of foreign contact, it is doubtful whether it can succeed. Tourists will want to see Havana and Santiago, as well as Varadero Beach. In such large urban settings, it will be extremely difficult—if not impossible—to prevent interaction between Cubans and North American visitors.

By the same token, telephone communications between the two countries should be upgraded. Existing facilities could be vastly improved, but so far such measures have foundered on the embargo: The law prohibits funds from being transferred to the Cuban government; consequently, Havana's share of past earnings remains frozen. This is a relatively small amount of money and ought not to be allowed to stand in the way of measures that would greatly facilitate contacts between U.S. and Cuban nationals. (Cuban Americans would especially benefit from such changes.) Accordingly, AT&T should be allowed to upgrade its services; and the Cuban government should be given its "full and fair" share of past and future revenues.<sup>61</sup>

The embargo should also be modified to allow the export of computer-related hardware, software and other telecommunications and printing devices (FAX and xerox machines, desk-top publishing equipment, hand-held camcorders, and so on). Such technology played an important role in opening up societies and bringing down regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. While conditions in Cuba are significantly different—the absence of strong and independent social organizations or a leadership willing to accept substantive reforms are crucial variables—in the long

run the information revolution should help foster the emergence of a civil society.<sup>62</sup> Even in the shorter run, such communication would increase the flow of ideas and information into, out of, and within Cuba, making it easier for dissident elements to communicate and fostering an increasing fragmentation and alienation of the elite.

Along these same lines, we should lift prohibitions on the direct marketing of books, periodicals, newspapers, records, compact disks, VCRs, videotapes and other communications items. Direct mail service should be established. U.S. press offices should be set up in Havana and Santiago. (In return, Prensa Latina should be allowed to open bureaus in the United States.) The U.S. Government, both on its own and by encouraging private institutions, should seek to promote scientific, educational and cultural exchanges. It should also stop pressuring foreign corporations from investing in Cuba, since exposure to Western business practices may be expected to broaden the worldview of Cuba's economic managers.<sup>63</sup> The object of all these measures would be to increase Western contacts with all levels of Cuban society—with elites as well as masses. *It should be our aim to flood Cuba with foreign students, businessmen, teachers, tourists, researchers, journalists, artists and other carriers of the liberal democratic, materialistic virus.* To facilitate these efforts, a civil aviation agreement should be reached to allow regularly scheduled air flights between the United States and Cuba.

A third category of measures relates to government-to-government cooperation on matters that are in the interest of both countries. Such items would include counternarcotics operations (the sharing of intelligence, joint interdiction); an agreement to regularize Cuban migration to the United States and provide for the return of illegal entrants who have committed serious crimes; the forecasting of hurricanes and other weather-related disasters; joint efforts in environmental protection and reclamation; and a new anti-hijacking agreement. This last is badly needed to deter airlines and boat seizures, which are becoming increasingly commonplace. Such cooperation might well lead to other

forms—e.g., the reciprocal inspection of nuclear power plants. (An issue that will be of major interest to residents of south Florida if Cuba's Juragua plant ever becomes operational.)

**Final Thoughts:  
On the Pitfalls and Prospects of the Future.**

The above measures can be taken at minimum cost (and, indeed, some net gain) for the United States. They will neither "save" Castro nor restore Cuba to prosperity. Nor do they "give away the store" by surrendering our bargaining chips before more substantive negotiations have begun. We are speaking here of an adjustment, rather than a repeal, of the U.S. embargo. Most trade restrictions would be retained; American investment in Cuba would continue to be prohibited. This is only prudent. To permit investment under current conditions would be reckless. Castro has made a career out of "hitting the Yankees." He nationalized American properties once; and, given the right circumstances, he might do so again. Moreover, one can only speculate what his successors will do. CANF leaders, for instance, have said that, if they come to power, they will confiscate the businesses of the regime's foreign "collaborators."

In short, the most difficult issues—including a transition to democracy, the full lifting of the embargo, and the return of Guantanamo—will not be soon or easily resolved. Castro remains, as always, a control freak of the first magnitude. He will almost certainly resist any changes that would undermine his power or his ideological vision of what Cuba ought to be. As far back as 1987, he correctly diagnosed the dangers inherent in glasnost and perestroika, warning of the disintegrative effect that they would have on the Soviet bloc. More recently, at the Fourth Party Congress, he rejected any substantive political or economic reforms as too risky under present conditions.

On the other hand, I would argue that, due to the current crisis, constructive engagement now has a better chance of working than ever before. Previous proposals to "soften" U.S. policy have always suffered from the fact that Castro had an

attractive alternative to coming to terms with the United States: Rigidity and defiance cost him little, since the Soviets were willing to subsidize his economic blunders and foreign adventures. That is no longer the case, however. Cuba has lost its economic lifeline; it stands alone and vulnerable. Under these circumstances (the "double blockade," as Castro calls it), the incentive/temptation to come to terms will be much greater than in the past. Cuba needs us now, whereas it did not before. That gives us a source of bargaining leverage that can and should be exploited. No doubt Fidel will try to counteract and contain the erosion of his personal power, as well as that of his regime. But it is by no means clear whether or to what extent this can be done. The opening of Cuba to U.S. influence would mean that both sides would be sailing into uncharted waters. With what results cannot confidently be predicted.

One should state right up front that this strategy is not without a certain amount of risk. Among other things, it might contribute to the destabilization of Cuba. One need only recall the impact of the massive return of Cuban Americans to the island during the Carter administration: it produced a social explosion that led to the emigration of some 129,000 Cubans via the Mariel express. Conditions are much worse now than they were in 1980; and the impulse to flee will be much greater, should the opportunity arise.

This being said, another massive exodus on the scale of or larger than Mariel seems improbable. Mariel was possible only because the Carter administration made the mistake of allowing Cuban Americans to provide the boats by which the vast majority of refugees fled. It is unlikely in the extreme that President Clinton would make the same error. (Witness his recent turnaround on the Haitian refugee issue.) Without external sources of transportation, Cubans would probably be limited to those crafts that they could build or commandeer. As the United States has demonstrated in the Haitian crisis, it has the ability to stem this kind of exodus. A more massive and unmanageable outpouring could occur only with the complicity of Cuban authorities—for instance, by using the government's merchant marine fleet to provide the necessary transportation.

Such a move would constitute an act of war and would probably be treated as such.<sup>64</sup> For precisely this reason, it seems unlikely to occur.

There is, of course, a possibility that an opening up of Cuba might lead to such turmoil that the government would lose control. A reduction (and elimination, if possible) of the "Yankee threat" would deprive Castro of much of his rationale for repression; it would erode his capacity for control and make it much more difficult to mobilize the masses behind his leadership through the use of jingoistic appeals; it would also make it more difficult for him to escape responsibility for Cuba's economic woes by blaming the Americans. Beyond this, an opening of Cuba to outside influences, especially if it were to be accompanied by political and economic reforms and an improvement in socioeconomic conditions, might foster hopes, expectations and demands that the regime would be unable to handle. Again, it is when people see that there is a possibility of change that they will be most likely to revolt.

This could be a slippery slope. The most dangerous moment for a bad government is when it tries to reform.<sup>65</sup> A misstep—say, police overreaction to a spontaneous disturbance—could escalate a small problem into something much larger. By the same token, exposing the Cuban elite to U.S. influences (including elite-to-elite contacts) might accelerate the former's abandonment of the regime. A coup, rebellion or assassination is not beyond the realm of possibility—especially if changes in American policy are able to reduce the threat perception of the elite. (As matters now stand, would-be rebels within the regime do not know whether we would greet them as heroes or hang them.)

The irony of constructive engagement, then, is that it might well prove to be a more effective way of undermining the dictatorship than the "hard-line" policies of the Castrophobes. At this stage, however, arguments as to its stabilizing or destabilizing effects are purely speculative. Fidel is not without resources to defend himself. (One would anticipate, for instance, that he would continue to restrict the number of Cuban Americans who would be allowed to visit, since their

presence could have an especially volatile effect.) Most likely, he will be around for some time regardless of what we do.

The bottom line is that getting rid of Castro is much less important than preserving Cuba's stability. It is not in the U.S. interest to promote a violent solution to the crisis. The results could be very bloody; and we could easily get sucked into a civil war. (The pressure to intervene in order to prevent a "bloodbath" would be considerable.) In a desperate situation, Castro might resort to desperate measures. (An attack on Florida's Turkey Point nuclear power facility, for example.) Cubans have a long and glorious tradition of heroic martyrdom. Castro might prefer to go out in a blaze of glory rather than surrender to his hated nemesis.

Our primary goal should be to minimize the possibility of such a cataclysmic ending. Beyond that, we should try to create an atmosphere which would allow a reduction of repression and the introduction of real reforms. A lessening of tensions between Cuba and the United States is a prerequisite for such a liberalization. Castro himself might be willing to begin this process. Although one may be skeptical as to how far he would be willing to take it, a beginning is better than nothing at all.

While we are at it, we should take the opportunity to explore Castro's recent hints that he might be willing to step down in return for an end to the embargo and a normalization of relations. ("If I were the obstacle, I would be willing to give up not only my positions and responsibilities, but even my life.")<sup>66</sup> Though he was quick to qualify this "offer" (it would not be a "personal" decision; he would have to consult his colleagues), it may be useful to push him on the issue. The possibility of a gradual transition, culminating in an "honorable" withdrawal, may seem like a long shot. But it is not beyond the bounds of possibility, especially if his health fails. At worst, if he proves recalcitrant and progress on other matters stalls, we could have Radio Marti repeatedly rebroadcast the remark to remind Cubans who the real "obstacle" is.

In any event, Fidel will not be here forever. We must think in terms of the long run. A political transition that would span the last years of the dictatorship and the initial post-Castro era

may offer the best chance for peaceful change. Accordingly, it may be time to begin cultivating very discretely those elements in the elite who are receptive to reforms, with a view to facilitating more profound transformations once Castro has gone. This will admittedly be a touchy proposition. If it is done in a ham-handed manner, it could undermine the very people we are trying to help. Thus, the need is crucial for careful thought and planning. If this cannot be done in a way that will not jeopardize potential friends and allies, it is better not to do it at all.

Again, the United States will be in a stronger position than ever before to use its influence to encourage such developments. Cuba's desperate socioeconomic plight and her lack of viable alternatives give us an opportunity to use our bargaining leverage effectively for the first time in over three decades. By employing a combination of positive and negative incentives (rather than all sticks and no carrots, as we have usually done), we may well be able to coax Cuba in the direction of greater political, social, and economic freedom. In the past, Castro has always had a vested interest in hostility with the United States. The trick will be to give him sufficient political and economic incentives to change.

In short, we should continue to press our concerns about human rights and democracy and encourage the regime to undertake substantive reforms. But we must be ready to reward positive behavior. At the same time, we should seek to involve other democratic governments in Latin America and Europe in a common approach to the Cuban problem. Better to stand together with our friends and allies than to try to impose a solution unilaterally.

It might be objected, of course, that, however desirable this strategy may be in the abstract, it is irrelevant, since domestic political considerations make it unlikely to be adopted. This is, granted, a serious problem. The veto of Mario Baeza by the Miamians demonstrates the continuing influence of hardline elements in the Cuban American community.<sup>67</sup> Still, the struggle over Cuba policy is just beginning. There is a new and more liberal administration in office, one moreover that owes little to the Miamians. In spite of his strong, early support for

the Torricelli Bill, candidate Clinton won only about 20 percent of the Cuban American vote.<sup>68</sup> The campaign is now over. If he has the will, the new president should be able to take some initiatives relatively free from the pressures and constraints of electoral politics. A window of opportunity is opening on the Cuba issue. If this administration can initiate policies, rather than merely react to crises (as did its predecessor), then there is a possibility that the dialectic of hostility that has so long dominated U.S.-Cuban relations can be tempered and perhaps broken.

In the end, it may be that Castro is "so entrenched in a bunker mentality"<sup>69</sup> that he would reject our attempts to reconstitute the nature of the U.S.-Cuban "game." But if so, then at least the onus of responsibility would be on him, where it belongs. It is a gamble worth taking.



## ENDNOTES

1. Quoted in Andrew Rosenthal, "Soviet Pledge on Cuba Leaves U.S. Paralyzed," *The New York Times*, September 13, 1991.

2. See Susan Kaufman Purcell, "Collapsing Cuba," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 1, 1992, pp. 130-45; Andres Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour: The Secret Story Behind the Coming Downfall of Communist Cuba*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992; and Eleana Cardoso and Ann Helwege, *Cuba After Communism*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.

3. For details, see Jorge F. Perez-Lopez, "Swimming Against the Tide: Implications for Cuba of Soviet and Eastern European Reforms in Foreign Economic Relations," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 33, No. 2, Summer, 1991, p. 107.

4. Between 1984 and 1989, the price paid by the Soviet Union for Cuban sugar fell from almost 915 rubles per ton to about 749 rubles per ton.

5. Howard J. Wiarda, "Is Cuba Next? Crises of the Castro Regime," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 40, No. 1-2, January-April, 1991, p. 89.

6. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Daily Report: Latin America*, October 8, 1991.

7. Gerald F. Seib, "Soviets Scale Back Presence in Cuba, but Intend to Keep a Listening Post 90 Miles Off U.S. Coast," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 9, 1991.

8. FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, October 8, 1991. As of 1990, Cuba owed the Soviet Union at least 15 billion rubles, or more than \$24 billion at the official exchange rate. Beginning in 1995 that debt would be payable in dollars at a rate that was yet to be determined. Interestingly enough, however, the Cubans themselves estimated that the Soviet figure was at least 2 billion rubles too low. Howard W. French, "Cuban Defector Tells of Soviet Cuts," *The New York Times*, September 13, 1990.

9. FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, October 16, 1991.

10. *Ibid.*, October 10, 1991.

11. *Ibid.*, January 2, 1992.

12. In December 1991, the Soviet Union had ceased to exist. Russia became an independent country, part of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

13. Ken Gluck, "Cuba Receives Last Shipment of Russian Oil," *Miami Herald*, July 20, 1992.

14. In the words of First Deputy Foreign Minister Fernando Ramirez. FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, August 31, 1992.

15. According to Politburo member, Osmani Cienfuegos, in *Ibid.*, September 1, 1992.

16. Juan O. Tamayo, "Russia-Cuba Oil Deal Signals Warming Ties," *Miami Herald*, November 16, 1992.

17. This is assuming a world market price of \$8,000 a ton. Unfortunately for Cuba, the price of nickel has recently fallen to about \$5,800 per ton. Moreover, nickel production for 1992 was about 25 percent less than expected.

18. Andrew Zimbalist, "Teetering on the Brink: Cuba's Post-CMEA Economic and Political Crisis" (Paper delivered at the SSI roundtable on "Cuba and the Future," January 16, 1992), pp. 11-13.

19. And this is an optimistic estimate. In addition to tourism, nickel and biotechnology, some additional revenues may be gained from citrus, fish, tobacco and a few other products. But this is peanuts. Moreover, even if light crude is found, it normally takes 5 to 7 years to bring a discovery into production.

20. FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, September 9, 1992.

21. To make matters worse, they also informed Cuba that they would be unable to supply an automated control system, considered a crucial safety feature ever since Chernobyl.

22. Actually, Cuba's purchasing power was probably closer to \$3.5 billion. Lage, apparently, was only including the state sector purchasing power. Some Cuban companies and joint enterprises with foreign partners operate independently of state central planning. See Mimi Whitefield, "Cuban Foreign Trade Down 75 percent Since '89," *Miami Herald*, November 16, 1992; also the figures of Leonel Soto, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, December 4, 1992.

23. Most of the world's sugar is sold in national and regional markets at highly subsidized prices (around 40 cents a pound). Most of the remainder goes to various national or supra-national markets, such as the United States and the EEC. (At this writing, the European Community buys sugar at 25.7 cents a pound, and the United States at 21.6 cents a pound.) The remainder--making up less than 2 percent of all sugar sales--is the "world market."

24. FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, November 12 and 16, 1992.

25. See, e.g., Andrew Zimbalist, "Treading Water: Cuba's Economic and Political Crisis in 1993," in *Cuba and the Future*, Donald E. Schulz, ed., Westport: Greenwood Press, forthcoming.

26. FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, September 8, 1992.

27. In place of normal food, the state-controlled media promoted such exotic delicacies as the "grapefruit steak." (Remove the rind, season, cover with bread crumbs and fry.) There were, it seemed, a thousand and one ways to prepare potatoes and tomatoes.

28. J. Richard Planas, "Why Does Castro Survive?" (Paper delivered at the SSI roundtable on "Cuba and the Future," January 16, 1992), p. 3.

29. See Lee Hockstader, "Castro's Tenacious Art of Survival," *The Washington Post*, May 9, 1992.

30. Sergio Roca. Quoted in Howard W. French, "Castro Steels A Suffering Nation for Confrontation," *The New York Times*, October 12, 1992.

31. Baloyra, "Where Does Cuba Stand?" (Paper delivered at the SSI roundtable on "Cuba and the Future," January 16, 1992), pp. 7-8.

32. FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, September 27, 1991.

33. Ochoa had apparently been trying to build a power base of his own within the Western Army. He was courting other officers with gifts and engaging in "populist" appeals. At the same time, he was trying to expand the powers of that command (which he had been scheduled to assume prior to his arrest) to include the air, naval and anti-aircraft defense forces in the region. The portrait presented in Raul Castro's speech to the Western Army and his report to the military tribunal which heard the case was that of a man who was increasingly alienated and disrespectful of Fidel and who had criticized the latter's handling of the Angolan campaign and certain other policies as well. For details of the Ochoa case, see *Narcotrafico: Crimen Sin Fronteras* (La Habana: Editorial Jose Marti, 1989); also Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour*, pp. 17-129.

34. According to such defectors as General Rafael Del Pino and Major Florintino Azpillaga. See Radio Marti Program, U.S. Information Agency, *Cuba Annual Report 1987*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991, pp. 12, 242-47, 411-15, 435. Some Cubanologists have expressed skepticism about such reports.

35. See Raul's speech to the Western Army, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, June 20, 1989.

36. Planas, "Why Does Castro Survive?", p. 9.

37. Members of the elite do not suffer the same kind of deprivation as ordinary Cubans. They still have access to all kinds of privileges (hard-currency stores, good food, luxury items, quality medical care, and so on). No doubt they have been inconvenienced by the current crisis; but this is not the same thing that most folks are experiencing.

38. FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, January 9, 1992.

39. Though whether he was a real reformer or merely an opportunist remains a subject of debate among Cubanologists.

40. See Mimi Whitefield and Andres Oppenheimer, "No. 3 Man in Cuba is Booted," *Miami Herald*, September 24, 1992.

41. FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, January 6, 1992.

42. *Ibid.*, October 23, 1992.

43. Baloyra, "Where Does Cuba Stand?", p. 8.

44. The need to preserve Castro's leadership is so great that some sectors of the elite give the appearance of trying to bolster Fidel's morale by telling him what he no doubt desperately wants to hear: that Cubans still overwhelmingly support him and the single-party system and are determined to "save the fatherland and the revolution." See Andres Oppenheimer on the dubious science of public opinion polling in Cuba. "Increasingly, Castro Loses Touch with Cuba," *Miami Herald*, July 28, 1992.

45. On Castro's "hubris-nemesis complex," see Edward Gonzalez and David Ronfeldt, *Castro, Cuba, and the World*, Rand Corporation, R-3420, June 1986.

46. Almost 90 percent of Cuban imports from U.S. subsidiaries in foreign countries is in food and medicine. There is some question, however, as to the effectiveness of these sanctions. If they can't buy goods from U.S. firms, the Cubans will probably just take their business to companies that are entirely foreign-owned. For a comprehensive critique of the Torricelli Law, see the testimony of Wayne S. Smith before the Subcommittee on Trade, House Ways and Means Committee, August 10, 1992.

47. This argument, it should be noted, is very different from the old claim that the United States "pushed Castro into the arms of the Soviets." Rather, conservative Washington and revolutionary Havana were about as compatible as oil and water. Both through their actions and their inactions, they drove each other away. For a detailed treatment of this theme, see

Donald E. Schulz, "The Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1977), vol. 2.

48. It is surely no accident that Cuban intelligence agents, who had taken over the leadership of one of the "dissident" groups on the island (the Cuban Democratic Coalition), had publicly supported the Torricelli Bill.

49. See Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1955, p. 176.

50. Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour*, p. 323.

51. See the testimony of Francisco Avila Azcuy, Alpha 66's senior military commander, in *The New York Times*, November 11, 1992.

52. This is probably true of many who have benefitted from the revolution over the years. It is hard to say how much popular support Castro retains, but he clearly has some. He appears to have the backing of many rural Cubans. Beyond this and the black/mulatto element, the regime also has roots among the older sector of the population. (Andres Oppenheimer calls this the "zombie factor.") See Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour*, pp. 304-37; and Howard W. French, "Rural Cuba Speaks Out for Castro," *The New York Times*, July 12, 1992.

53. Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour*, p. 328.

54. On Mas Canosa, see especially Lee Hockstader and William Booth, "Cuban Exiles Split on Life After Castro," *The Washington Post*, March 10, 1992; Larry Rohter, "When a City Newspaper is the Enemy" and "A Rising Cuban-American Leader: Statesman to Some, Bully to Others," in the *The New York Times*, March 19, and October 29, 1992, respectively; and Carla Anne Robbins, "Dateline Washington: Cuban American Clout," *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 88, Fall 1992, pp 170-82.

55. Comments of Ricardo Planas at the SSI roundtable on "Cuba and the Future," January 16, 1992.

56. Similar, though by no means identical, proposals have been offered by the Inter-American Dialogue, in *Cuba in the Americas: Reciprocal Challenges*, Washington, DC, October 1992, pp. 6-8; and Gillian Gunn, "In Search of a Modern Cuba Policy," in *Cuba and the Future*, Donald E. Schulz, ed., Westport: Greenwood Press, forthcoming.

57. In Linda Robinson, "After Castro Moves Out," *U.S. News and World Report*, May 4, 1992, p. 42.

58. I am indebted to Carmelo Mesa-Lago for these suggestions.

59. Distribution might be supervised at the Cuban end by international observers, such as the United Nations or the Red Cross, to assure that these materials are not diverted to the *nomenklatura* or other unintended purposes.

60. Gillian Gunn, "Will Castro Fall?" *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 79, Summer 1990; see also Edward Gonzalez and David Ronfeldt, *Cuba Adrift in a Postcommunist World*, Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1992, pp. 71-77.

61. Inter-American Dialogue, *Cuba*, p. 6.

62. Gonzalez and Ronfeldt, *Cuba Adrift*, pp. 73-74.

63. Gunn, "In Search of a Modern Cuba Policy,"; see also *Latin American Weekly Report*, March 11, 1993.

64. I have been told by more than one knowledgeable U.S. Government source that the Cubans have been informed in no uncertain terms that we will not permit another refugee crisis.

65. See again Tocqueville, *The Old Regime*, p. 176.

66. *Miami Herald*, March 5, 1993; see also FBIS, *Daily Report: Latin America*, February 26, 1993.

67. Baeza was to be nominated as assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs until the Miamians got wind of it.

68. Mirta Ojito and Alfonso Chardy, "Mas, Foundation May Face Competition in Shaping Cuba Policy," *Miami Herald*, November 5, 1992.

69. Wayne S. Smith, "Castro: To Fall or Not to Fall?" *SAIS Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Summer 1992, p. 110.

**U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE**

**Major General William A. Stofft  
Commandant**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE**

**Director  
Colonel John W. Mountcastle**

**Acting Director of Research  
Dr. Thomas L. Wilborn**

**Author  
Dr. Donald E. Schulz**

**Editor  
Mrs. Marianne P. Cowling**

**Secretary  
Miss Shirley Shearer**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**Composition  
Daniel B. Barnett**